

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE RODNEY E. SLATER
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION-DESIGNATE
before the
United States Senate
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
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Mr. Chairman, Senator Hollings, Members of the Committee:

I am pleased to join you today and to have this opportunity to share with you my vision of a United States Department of Transportation that not only meets the transportation needs of today and the 21st century, but that helps every American achieve his or her personal goals and that supports the freedoms we so rightly cherish.

Let me begin by saying that our transportation network is the envy of the world, and it makes us the most mobile society on earth. For this accomplishment, I pay tribute to the tireless men and women of the Department of Transportation and all of our partners who have built a solid foundation on which America can build the bridge to the 21st century.

If the Senate honors me with confirmation, my highest priorities would fall under three broad areas. First, I will continue to make safety and security the highest priority of the Department. Nothing is more important than working to ensure the American public has the safest transportation system possible. I will strive to raise our current high levels of safety to even greater heights, especially in the face of rapid growth in the use of our transportation network.

Second, I will work with Congress on a number of fronts to continue strategic investment in our transportation infrastructure, which is vital to not only our economy, but also our quality of life. These strategic investments include ISTEA reauthorization, the reauthorization of several other transportation programs, and enactment of FAA financial reform to complete the work of the Administration and Congress to provide the FAA with the tools and resources it needs. I will also work with our transportation partners to aggressively implement the legislation enacted to give the Department the tools to reform the FAA acquisition and personnel procedures, to reform our nation's maritime programs, and to enhance the safety of our network of oil and gas pipelines.

Third, I will continue to bring common sense government to the Department of Transportation in order to provide the people we serve with a Department that works better and costs less. I will encourage more innovative and flexible funding to leverage federal dollars for infrastructure investment, technology

use to improve the performance of our transportation system, and transportation policies that are sensitive to environmental concerns.

President Clinton's leadership has resulted in record-level transportation infrastructure investment over the last four years, because our President understands that, as you cut the deficit, you must also invest in America's future. We all know that a safe and efficient transportation system represents not only a strategic investment in our strong and growing economy, but also a strategic investment in our people, because transportation is their access to opportunity. I pledge to continue to work together with Congress and our partners all across this great nation to ensure a visionary and vigilant Department that meets the transportation challenges of the 21st century. The American people deserve no less.

When President Clinton nominated me to succeed Secretary Federico Peña, I was proud and humbled that I would have this new opportunity, subject to Senate confirmation, to serve the American people. I have seen, first at the State level, then at the Federal Highway Administration, and now as I consider the entire Department of Transportation, that no field offers a greater opportunity than transportation to shape, as the President said during his Second Inaugural Address, "the forces of the Information Age and the global society, to unleash the limitless potential of all our people, and yes, to form a more perfect union."

These past four years, I have had the privilege of serving under a President and a Secretary who understand the central importance of transportation and who accomplished much in a relatively short time. I share with the President and with Secretary Peña a basic vision about the role of government and about the role of the Department of Transportation that can be summed up any number of ways, but the President said it best early in his first term: Putting People First.

What Transportation Means to America

I can tell you, quite simply, that I have a very expansive vision of what transportation means to our society and to our people. I look to history for my guide in seeing how transportation has pulled us together as a Nation, how transportation has sustained our dreams, and how transportation has given us the freedom to enjoy the right, promised by the Declaration of Independence, to "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

In the 20th century, perhaps no President had a clearer vision, and more historic results from his vision, than President Dwight D. Eisenhower. In a 1955 message to Congress, he provided an eloquent explanation of why the Interstate System was so important. In doing so he echoed the sentiments of Presidents throughout history:

Our unity as a nation is sustained by free communication of thought and by easy transportation of people and goods. The ceaseless flow of information throughout the Republic is matched by individual and commercial movement over a vast system of interconnected highways crisscrossing the country and joining at our national borders with friendly neighbors to the north and south.

To those who think I make too much of transportation, who think that after all it is really just concrete, asphalt, and steel, I refer you to a stretch of road that runs from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. It's part of U.S. 80, and it carries the same daily traffic--the cars, the trucks, the motorcycles, the RV's, the buses--as any other part of the route or any other stretch of road in America.

But this stretch of highway is different, because it made a difference in the lives of every American. On March 21, 1965, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., led a band of marchers across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma to Montgomery, to protest voting restrictions that disenfranchised most African Americans. Four days later in Montgomery, standing on the Capital grounds, he told his assembled supporters that they had marched for "the realization of the American dream." On August 6, 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed the legislation that empowered African Americans and all Americans to cast their ballot for the American dream of which Dr. King spoke.

Last September, the Selma-to-Montgomery section of U.S. 80 was designated an All-American Road under our National Scenic Byways Program, not because it is beautiful, for many would argue that it is not; not because it is scenic, for others would argue that it is not--but because this road, these lanes, symbolize the most beautiful idea of all: the American Dream.

So let me assure you that I think the federal government has a strong role to play in transportation, by providing a balance among the diverse interests of the States, leadership in advancing technology for a new century, and guidance in ensuring that vital national interests are met.

If confirmed, I look forward to working to achieve the new role the President has outlined: that of a government that empowers each American to fulfill his or her own personal destiny.

Accomplishments: Department of Transportation

I would like to talk to you today about what we have accomplished in the past four years and what I hope to accomplish in the next 4 years.

Let me say I look forward to Secretary Peña remaining in Washington, so that the American people will continue to have the benefit of his skills, his vision, and his wisdom. He forged a team at the Department of Transportation that is committed to creating the intermodal transportation system this country will need in the 21st century to support economic growth, to enhance our competitiveness in international marketplaces, and to expand the mobility of the American people.

Recently, in saying farewell to the Department's employees, he described some of the Department's accomplishments he is proudest of, and I will share just a few of them with you. He spoke of--

- Hundreds of thousands of private sector jobs created by strategic infrastructure investment.
- New aviation safety and security regulations that make the skies safer for our families.
- A reinvigorated, stronger transit program.
- A revitalized American shipbuilding industry.
- Innovative livable communities program.
- Success at drug interdiction.
- A pivotal role in dealing humanely and professionally with the massive Cuban and Haitian migration.
- The work we've done to increase the safety of the cars that Americans drive and our efforts to help them drive safely.
- The progress we have made in intelligent transportation systems, high speed rail, and new technologies such as the global positioning system.
- Success in increasing railroad safety, in helping make rail-highway crossing safety a focus of national attention, and building a stronger Amtrak as a vital element of our transportation network.
- Efforts to reach out to minorities and to women to ensure equal opportunity for our partners around the country.
- The building of a new, more diverse leadership within the Department.

- The way DOT answered the Vice President's call to reinvent the Department of Transportation and to streamline operations so it can better serve its customers.
- And the commitment, which I strongly share, to the environment--to cleaning up and preventing oil spills, protecting National Parks, partnering on clean-car technology, and designating National Scenic Byways.

In short, Secretary Peña leaves behind a strong legacy of accomplishment on which to build America's transportation future. The existing links between the Departments of Energy and Transportation will become even stronger as we work together, based on the bonds of trust that have grown between us.

Accomplishments: Federal Highway Administration

I want to take a moment, too, to tell you how proud I am of what the Federal Highway Administration has accomplished this past four years. I know Secretary Peña would agree with me that in listing our achievements, we are really complimenting the people who are at the heart of what we do, namely our committed employees.

The Federal Highway Administration is a relatively small organization (fewer every day through attrition--about 3,500 men and women) with a \$20 billion-a-year mission. We accomplish that mission through cooperation with our traditional partners, the State transportation departments and metropolitan planning organizations, and with newer partners who are focused on the environment, bikeways, pedestrian walkways, and other related aspects that add to the beauty and livability of communities across the Nation.

Today, few things touch us in so many ways as the Interstate System. Almost everything we own traveled on the Interstate System at some point before arriving at our home. Our daily routines--going to work, to school, to the store, to church--and the special moments in our families' lives--the birth of a baby, a daughter's wedding, family vacations--often take us onto this vision in concrete, asphalt, and steel.

I now would like to take a moment to highlight some of the achievements I am proudest of over the past four years.

One of the biggest challenges we faced was making the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) work. ISTEA juggled relationships and shifted power between levels of government. It included many new and complex requirements. It brought new and old partners

together in sometimes uneasy alliances. It set ambitious goals that altered our transportation priorities.

ISTEA, in short, rocked the boat. And that's exactly what Congress had in mind. As a result, making ISTEA work required partnering, brokering, and a form of "tender loving care" to facilitate the coming together of interests. I am proud that the Federal Highway Administration has the personnel, the resources, and the flexibility to help State and local officials build new relationships for exercising their new responsibility. The sincere attempts by all parties to work within the ISTEA framework strengthened old partnerships, created new ones, and brought us all together in a way that has energized this country's whole transportation community.

I also would highlight the most extensive outreach effort ever undertaken in the agency's 104-year history. During my tenure, I led this effort by visiting most of the States and Puerto Rico, as well as working directly with the District of Columbia, meeting with thousands of people who use, construct, maintain, and manage our transportation system. For me, the road tours were perhaps my most important means of outreach. I set out on the first one in April 1994, from Buffalo, New York, to Laredo, Texas, with a goal of looking, listening, and learning--then acting on what I saw.

In recent weeks, there has been much talk about initiatives to help the District of Columbia. I am proud of the role the Federal Highway Administration has played, cooperating with Congress and the President, in helping the District improve its transportation network.

I also am proud of several other accomplishments:

- Working with Congress, we provided record levels of infrastructure investment to help carry out the President's commitment to "Rebuild America." Investment increased 21 percent, from an annual average of \$21.1 billion in fiscal years 1990-1993 to an average of \$25.5 billion in fiscal years 1994-1997.
- We cooperated with Congress and our State and local partners to identify routes for the National Highway System, which was designated on November 28, 1995, when the President signed the National Highway System Designation Act of 1995. We also have submitted a report to Congress, called *Pulling Together*, identifying intermodal connections, including rail, transit, seaport, and airport facilities, to be added to the National Highway System.
- We created innovative financing techniques that leverage federal dollars and stimulate greater investment in infrastructure. As a result,

more than \$5 billion worth of projects have moved to construction faster than would otherwise have been possible.

- We promoted innovative contracting techniques, such as design-build, that are helping to transform the contracting process to enhance quality--which is another way of saying service to our customers, the American motorist.
- We worked with the States and the private sector to develop intelligent transportation systems that will help America meet the growing demands of its transportation network at a time when efficiency, rather than expansion, is the key criterion.
- We recommitted the agency to the National Quality Initiative, an historic initiative of longstanding partners who want to promote excellence in all aspects of highway research, design, planning, and construction.
- We launched a variety of life-saving initiatives, including "Sharing the Road--No Zone," the Red Light Running Prevention Campaign, the Capital Beltway Safety Task Force, the Railroad-Highway Grade Crossing Safety Action Plan, the National Work Zone Safety Program, and the Safety Action Plan.
- We designated the first six All-American Roads and the first 11 National Scenic Byways under the National Scenic Byways Program created by ISTEA.
- We have worked with our partners to ensure that highway transportation projects and programs enhance the communities and the environment through which they pass. Our initiatives include a revised Environmental Policy Statement in 1994, cooperation with the Environmental Protection Agency to ensure that transportation continues to contribute to increasing quality of our air, and initiatives to create one-stop shopping for the environmental reviews that are so important to the development of any project. We also enhanced environmental sensitivity within the agency by conducting Environmental Leadership Seminars for our top field staff.
- Internationally, we have worked to facilitate trade with Canada and Mexico, for example by taking the lead in harmonizing land transportation standards, while helping other Nations, including South Africa, improve their transportation networks to support economic growth and freedom. Following my 1993 trip to Russia, we have supported democratization of the former Soviet Union by

initiating ongoing technical assistance and technology transfer, including private sector involvement.

- We launched a series of actions to improve motor carrier safety in cooperation with our motor carrier partners, including the first ever National Truck and Bus Safety Summit (1995), imposition of drug and alcohol testing of commercial drivers, and completion of the most thorough study ever of driver fatigue and drowsiness. We have seen considerable progress where it counts the most--a decline in fatal crashes involving large trucks, down from 2.7 per 100 million vehicle-miles in 1993 to 2.5 in 1995.
- We participated actively in the Vice President's National Performance Review, which helped us remove or modify numerous regulations, while we streamlined our operations to match them better not only to ISTEA's goals but to the needs of each State.

I'd like to mention just two other items that go directly to the heart of what the Federal Highway Administration is all about. One of my first experiences after taking office in 1993 was the Great Midwestern Floods. It was an eye opener in two respects, the first being the sheer amount of devastation the flooding caused. But secondly, and more importantly, I learned how committed the people of the Federal Highway Administration are to public service, to getting involved, and to being part of the communities in which they live. Our field staff pitched in and did everything possible to help reopen the highway lifelines disrupted by the floods .

I've seen this same spirit time and again, notably in the aftermath of the Northridge Earthquake that rocked the Los Angeles area in 1994 and destroyed several key Interstate links. The people of the Los Angeles area, whose daily routines were scrambled by the earthquake, benefited from close cooperation among the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, and the California Department of Transportation, through provisions made for temporary service that were needed until highway links were reopened, in record time, paid for 100 percent with federal funds.

In these instances, and in so many others, I have heard from Governors and top State transportation officials that our response to disasters is not just timely and efficient but compassionate--reflecting the highest ideals of government service and Federal-State partnership. I want to give credit to those who've earned it: the people who are the Federal Highway Administration.

The final item is the response to the Oklahoma City bombing, in which we lost 11 members of the Federal Highway Administration family. It's a day

none of us will ever forget. But when the survivors were told they could take time off to recover from the emotional shock, they agreed unanimously that what they wanted to do was get back to work as soon as possible. Our administrative staff worked miracles to find new office space and to equip it so our Division Office in Oklahoma was able to reopen within days after the tragedy. This commitment, not just to our mission, but to those who had fallen, was, again, a tribute to the people who are the Federal Highway Administration.

In short, I have been proud to lead a federal agency that has shaped its vision to the times and accomplished each of its missions with distinction. This is an agency well prepared to meet--and master--the uncertainties, challenges, and opportunities of the 21st century.

We have accomplished much, but much remains to be done.

Looking to the Department's Future

In looking to the future, we in the Department of Transportation must set high goals, must call on all our resources and all our reserves to build exponentially on the foundation created thus far.

In doing so, I can look to a former Secretary with whom I will share a unique distinction. If confirmed, I will be only the second Federal Highway Administrator to serve as Secretary of Transportation. The first was John A. Volpe, who served as the first Federal Highway Administrator from October 1956 to February 1957. In 1969, he was appointed by President Nixon to be the second Secretary of Transportation and served in that post until 1972. For his actions, for his leadership, and for his vision, Secretary Volpe is regarded by historians as one of the greatest Secretaries the Department of Transportation has had.

One of Secretary Volpe's sayings bears repeating as we look to the future:

I submit that as we live in times of change, we must be the architects of that change or we will most certainly be its victims.

As the President has said, when times change, so government must change. And so, as I look to the next four years, I believe we in the Department of Transportation must set high goals and must be architects of change, but we must also build a new balance in our relations with State and local governments. To do that I will be taking my lead from the President:

- I will be calling on the Department's employees to share their vision of how we can intensify our efforts to accomplish more, much more, to benefit the American people.

- I will be calling on State and local officials to help us build a new balance.
- I will be calling on private organizations to help us.
- And I will be calling on Congress to work with us.

Together, with the help of all these groups and individuals, we will intensify our efforts to the highest degree to build the safest, most efficient transportation network possible.

Certainly, in focusing our efforts, a priority for all of us must be legislation that will provide the framework for our 21st century transportation system.

The major transportation initiative to be undertaken by this Congress will be the reauthorization of ISTEA. When ISTEA was enacted in 1991, it was widely recognized as the most important surface transportation legislation since the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956. And justly so, for Congress wanted to build, through ISTEA, the post-Interstate program. ISTEA set ambitious goals, beginning with:

It is the policy of the United States to develop a National Intermodal Transportation System that is economically efficient and environmentally sound, provides the foundation for the nation to compete in the global economy, and will move people and goods in an energy efficient manner.

To accomplish this and its other goals, ISTEA was not a "highway bill" or a "transit bill." Instead, it revitalized our partnership with the States and local governments, giving them unprecedented flexibility to invest federal funds in projects that best meet their communities' needs. It encouraged increased participation by the public in the decisionmaking so that more Americans have a say in setting those priorities.

For the past year, Congress and the Department have been engaged in reaching out to groups and individuals across the country to gather ideas for reauthorization of ISTEA. What has emerged is a consensus that ISTEA works. Our goal must be, therefore, to build on ISTEA, not abandon it.

In reauthorization, we have the opportunity this year to advance the vision of ISTEA to strengthen the partnerships that it created, and to put the traveling public first when making investment decisions. We must have a transportation system that is designed around the trips we need to make, not the traditional modes of transportation. We need to think not only of our modal systems, but how they link together.

There are those who call for the federal government to abandon its role in surface transportation. As you can tell from what I have said thus far, I reject this idea. As ISTEA has demonstrated, the federal government can play, indeed must play, an important role in helping each State in a diverse union create the national network essential to maintain what Thomas Jefferson referred to as a "union of sentiment."

Such calls are often based on disputes over formula distribution of funds, mandates that a State believes are inappropriate, and a view--which I certainly reject--that the Federal Highway Administration is intrusive in State affairs and duplicative of State efforts. These concerns are, legitimately, up for debate. But at a time when Europe, our chief competitor in many markets, is pulling together, we should not be pulling apart, program by program, into a loose confederation of States that lacks the ability to deliver to the American people the benefits that we can only realize as a Nation.

No State lives in isolation--its citizens never traveling outside its borders, its businesses never working with businesses or customers elsewhere. No State ever turns away a tourist from elsewhere. Thus, the challenges before us are national in scope; and the solutions require national involvement. Traffic congestion and bottlenecks in major trade centers, such as Chicago and Los Angeles, not only impose delays on local commuters and regional freight, they also interfere with speedy cargo movements--movements that are essential to maintain our global competitiveness.

Safety is another example of the key role the federal government plays. Nothing is more important than safety, for any sudden loss of life or serious injury in a traffic incident is a tragedy that could have been avoided. The cost of such terrible events cannot be measured in dollars alone.

During the 1990's, traffic fatalities are at the lowest levels in 30 years--although the number has increased in the past year or two. I am talking about actual numbers, not fatality rates. In fact, if the fatality rate today were what it was in 1980, we would be losing 65,000 men, women, and children each year, not 41,798, as in 1995. Hundreds of thousands of people are alive today because of safety advances. We attained these reduced levels despite a tripling or more of vehicle miles of travel over that same period.

This safety record did not occur because of the efforts of each State operating on its own. The States played an important role, but it would be incorrect to assume they could have done it on their own. It happened because of agency automotive safety standards that the States could not have imposed; because of improved highway design standards developed by the States but adopted by the Federal Highway Administration for use on projects around the country; and because of the initiatives of private safety groups that kept pressure on

the federal, State, and local governments to address highway safety issues and that educated the public about them.

The federal government didn't do it all--and can't. We need the partnership of State and local officials, the cooperation of the auto and trucking industries, and the efforts of public spirited citizens to continue bringing down the toll of tragedy. But the federal government can continue to play a vital, catalytic role that we should not weaken--but build on.

We must do more, we will do more to keep safety in the forefront. I trust that reauthorization of ISTEA will give us an opportunity to take new strides forward. But in safety, as in many other areas of surface transportation, complete withdrawal by the federal government would be a huge step backward.

The Department will be submitting the President's reauthorization proposals to Congress next month. I will defer discussion of specific elements of reauthorization until that time. But our goal is to work with Congress to build on the success of ISTEA. I am pleased that over the years, surface transportation legislation, for all the controversies surrounding it, has been seen as bipartisan. I am pleased, too, that both authorization committees reflect this bipartisan spirit. So let me assure you that I plan to reach out to Congress as it builds the surface transportation legislation that will take America into a new millennium.

There is much more to the Department of Transportation than renewing the surface transportation assistance and safety programs represented by ISTEA. I look forward to working on the many challenges facing the aviation and maritime environments. I know we must develop a more stable funding stream for the Federal Aviation Administration to keep pace with aviation growth and to follow the path to longer-term financial reform that was laid out by this committee last year. We must complete a rigorous assessment of what it costs to manage and regulate the aviation system, and how to pay for this system in as fair a way as possible. Finding an adequate, dedicated, stable source of revenue to meet the growth of aviation is one of our greatest challenges. I look forward to working with you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of this committee in meeting the challenge.

The United States also must continue to play a vital role in pursuing more open, competitive aviation markets worldwide, with all the benefits they can bring in terms of increased business, tourism, and economic development. I can assure you that I will use the leverage provided by access to the vast United States market to urge our aviation partners to adopt more open markets--and to ensure expanded access to their markets for United States carriers.

Federal support for transit, like all transportation, is not an end in itself. Ten million people count on transit every day to get to jobs, schools, stores, and health care facilities. Another 25 million use transit less frequently, but on a regular basis. Transit facilitates the well-being of over 200 million Americans living in urbanized areas, and serves 30 million rural Americans who are unable to drive.

The new demands of welfare reform require that workers be able to get to their jobs. This is one of transit's principal roles--providing basic mobility. It is also an opportunity, one we must make available to the 37 million Americans below the poverty line who often cannot afford an automobile.

We have also initiated a new program to assist states and local agencies to define the impacts of mobility, to identify problem areas such as transportation service disconnects, and to develop strategies and solutions. Through the Research and Special Programs Administration, the Department is providing leadership in new technologies and options for meeting the transportation needs of the elderly, as well as transportation tailored to promote rural economic development and mobility in economic empowerment zones.

Always, in all we do, safety must be our highest priority, and we have an unprecedented opportunity to increase safety belt and child safety seat use substantially. Nearly all major safety organizations agree on the need to upgrade and enforce safety belt use laws and to support these laws with intensified public education efforts. The tragic deaths of children resulting from air bag deployments have added increased urgency to these needs. It is now time to change behavior--to get all children and adults properly buckled up, whenever possible with children in the back seat.

Last year, over 17,000 traffic fatalities, and many more injuries, involved alcohol. These crashes, injuries and fatalities are not accidents--they are predictable and preventable. We now have a unique opportunity to reduce this toll. A broad partnership has already been formed--called Partners in Progress--and it has agreed on national goals to reduce dramatically alcohol related traffic fatalities. I will work with the partnership to implement their strategies, and my personal mission will be to accelerate the pace of reduction.

The federal government also has a responsibility to play an effective role in bringing parties together to resolve problems. For example, in the past, railroad labor and management often took opposite sides on many issues--almost reflexively--and rarely talked to each other. The advent of the Railroad Safety Advisory Committee, which has brought all sides together, has proved a successful forum--and a model--for reviewing pending rules and regulations and building consensus.

As we move America to the next century, we must also recognize that America's interests do not end at our shorelines or our borders. Our interests--and our values--demand that we advance our economic, social, and environmental well-being well beyond our geographic boundaries.

In aviation, government must ensure a free market environment abroad as well as at home. We have already achieved the removal of decades-long restrictions in many European markets and we are moving forward with an initiative to reach open skies agreements with Asian economies.

The maritime programs have at their center the strengthening of our national and economic security. They accomplish this through genuine partnership with other government agencies and absolute reliance on the private sector to accomplish two goals: making our maritime transportation system the most modern, competitive, and efficient in the world and providing strategically critical sea-lift capacity to support our national security needs.

In drug enforcement, alien interdiction, environmental protection, navigation safety and national security missions, the United States Coast Guard plays a key role in advancing our nation's interests. The Coast Guard is widely recognized as one of the most competent and responsive organizations in our government. The Coast Guard responds rapidly and effectively to natural disasters, war, and the need for marine environmental protection. Like any federal activity, it now faces tight budgetary constraints, and I am told it is doing extremely well in its streamlining efforts. We need to ensure it continues to get the resources it needs to get the job done.

A new government for a new century will still need to remain anchored in the traditions and values that made our country great. These values are evident at the Department of Transportation. However, we must not let these same traditions inhibit our ability to adapt. We must commit to a better and more efficient government.

For the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, the Administration is seeking legislative authority to reconstitute it as a performance-based organization (PBO) consistent with the Vice President's reinvention initiative. The Corporation reflects two of the most important characteristics of a PBO--a focus on customer service and performance based outcomes. As a PBO, the Corporation will be able to adopt additional private sector practices.

We must commit to better and more efficient management of our assets--which are, in fact, the Nation's assets. Our government, and the Department of Transportation, will be proportionately smaller in the next century. And this smaller government will still have to give the American people the tools they need to solve the problems confronting our great Nation.

I look to the 21st century, and I see State and local transportation agencies advancing toward state-of-the-art/state-of-the-practice in all areas, including planning, design, finance, use of new materials, systems management, and construction practices.

I see the federal government as a coordinator, working with State and local transportation agencies and with the public to enhance transportation.

I see increasing privatization of transportation systems and more private investment in public transportation facilities.

I see growing acceptance of the need to manage existing transportation systems in an efficient manner.

I see the Modal Administrations within the Department of Transportation helping each mode of transportation do the work it does best--and ensuring that these modes link up into a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

I see increased intermodal shipments pulling modes more closely together out of mutual interest, not government intervention.

I see the National Highway System tying the Nation's transportation system into a seamless web of efficiency and safety that supports productivity increases and enhances competitiveness in international marketplaces.

I see safety consciousness continuing to reduce the number of fatalities and injuries from transportation incidents.

I see transportation in the 21st century serving the same role as the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's--empowering minorities, women, and immigrants to achieve the freedom that is only possible with full mobility.

I see roads without potholes, bridges that can bear the traffic crossing them, highways without congestion.

And I see an America poised to make the 21st century another American century.

Can we achieve this vision? In response I remind you of something Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said on that day in Montgomery when he addressed the 1965 Voting Rights Marchers. He said:

The road ahead is not altogether a smooth one. There are no broad highways to lead us easily and inevitably to quick solutions.

For the Department of Transportation, there are no broad highways to easy, quick solutions. But I hope that I can help us reach not just for the easy and the quick, but for the solutions that will make a difference in the long run, for the solutions that appear, but are not really, just beyond our reach.

I was honored that the President has given me this opportunity to serve the American people. I submit that my experience, my analytical abilities, and my managerial skills have prepared me to serve as Secretary of Transportation and as part of the President's team. I appreciate the broad support my nomination has received throughout the transportation community. With Senate confirmation, I look forward to working with the transportation community to build a bridge to the 21st century that will be, as the President said on January 20, "wide enough and strong enough for every American to cross over to a blessed land of new promise."